Regularly rebuffed proposals by RCMP, student leader says

By ANTHONY WESTELL Globe and Mail Reporter

OTTAWA - The RCMP has regularly approached the Canadian Union of Students over the past 15 years seeking intelligence information and has been regularly rebulled, the CUS president reported yes-

Douglas Ward said he could only speak for the CUS, but there were about 70 youth organizations in Canada that might have been approached. by the RCMP, and he hoped more information would be available in a few days.

The CUS called a press conference to describe the contacts with the RCMP following. disclosure that the Central Inof the telligence Agency United States has been providing hidden subsidies for student group activities.

The CUS accepted grants of \$1,500 in each of 1965 and 1966 from the Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs in New Fork without knowing it was a UIA front. The union has nsked the Canadian Governtient to protest to Washington about what it calls this "covert intrusion.

(The CIA did not get much value for its money, Mr. Ward added. The CUS decided last year to withdraw from the CIA-approved, Western-oriented International Student Conference because it was too busy fighting the cold war,

CUS in future will be only an associate member of ISC and is to become an associate member of the Communist-oriented International Union of Students in Czechoslovakia.

Mr. Ward conceded that CUS observers at IUS meetings in the past had probably received an element of subsidy. But CUS was not worried about that because it knew where the IUS funds came: from-mainly from east European governments-and what

they were for. Mr. Ward said in his statement yesterday: "To the best of my knowledge, the RCMP first contacted CUS - then NFCUS - in the early Pilties.

ceiving information gained by NFCUS observers at international student meetings, particularly those in eastern Eu-

"The RCMP was told it could receive only those reports and publications which were openly available to the membership of CUS and to the

"We have no information that the RCMP made an offer to the union to subsidize any expenses of the organization." Mr. Ward said he had telephoned five past presidents of the CUS and each had confirmed that he had been visited by the RCMP while in of-·fice.

He said he was telephoned by the RCMP last summer and asked for an interview as Incoming president. He replied that he would be glad to i Mr. Ward said in answer to meet an officer provided hecould have someone with him of his own choosing and that the conversation would be conisidered public.

The RCMP pressed for a meeting in a personal capacity but later agreed to a public meeting, he said.

"The interview itself was friendly. Topics ranged from: the work of the RCMP to the

work of the CUS.

"In addition to expressing interest in receiving information on the traditional topic eastern European student politics - the officer mentioned. that he was particularly interested in knowing about subversion in Canada.

"I refused to involve myself or the union in such reporting activities. Since then there has been no further communication from the RCMP."

In Montreal yesterday, Andre L'Heureux, 34, former executive secretary of NFCUS, said the RCMP twice in the late Nineteen Fiftles asked him to provide reports on student activities.

The first approach, he said, was in 1958 when two Algorian" students visited Canada on funds from a U.S. foundation. France at the time was have ing trouble in Algeria.

convention in Saskatoon in 1959. Foreign delegations were invited and the RCMP wanted reports on the activities of the Russian delegate.

Around Christmas, 1959, he said, the RCMP visited him again and offered him a bottle of rye, which he refused "because I wouldn't sell out for a mere bottle of rye."

Mr. L'Heureux is a technical adviser with the Confederation of National Trade Un-

Mr. Ward said he was concerned that the RCMP was seeking personal interviews with elected officials.

"It is entirely possible that? youth leaders are being asked to provide information in a manner quite contrary to the knowledge or wishes of the people who elected them," he

"An RCMP officer can take considerable advantage of young people, and it would be a tragedy if any evidence appears to show that a proportion of the people in youth and student movements are in the regular habit of providing inthey formation over which have no future control."

a question that a young person might be impressed by the opportunity of an interview with the RCMP and become more involved than he at first intended.

He saw a danger that even a defensive intelligence organization like the RCMP could subvert some of the qualities of life in a democratic society.

Asked why the CUS was disclosing RCMP visits, which had been going on for 15 years without protest by the CUS, Mr. Ward said the visits had come to be accepted as a regular pilgrimage. He denied that the disclosure was an effort to get some publicity resulting from the CIA disclosures in the United States.

Mr. Ward said the CUS had applied for the funds it received from the CIA front foundation in New York. There had been no strings attached.

He said there were few sources of funds in Canada and the union applied for money from a number of U.S. foundations. There was no way of checking the source beyond looking at the list of directors and the sort of proje ects it sponsored.